

called Paghesh occupied the site of the present Bitlis. It seems like the end of the world, though through the deep chasms below it, through which the Tigris descends with great rapidity to the plains, lies the highway to Diabekir. Suggestions of the ancient world abound. The lofty summits towering above the basin in which this extraordinary city lies are the termination of the Taurus chain, the Niphates of the ancients, on the highest peak of which Milton localised the descent of Satan.<sup>1</sup>

Eemote as Bitlis seems and is, its markets are among the busiest in Turkey, and its caravan traffic is enormous for seven or eight months of the year. Its altitude is only 4700 feet, and the mercury in winter rarely falls to zero, but the snowfall is tremendous, and on the Eahwan Plain snow frequently lies up to the top of the telegraph poles, isolating the town and shutting up animals in their stables and human beings in their houses for weeks, and occasionally months, at a time. Bitlis produces a very coarse, heavy cotton cloth which, after being dyed madder red or dark blue, is largely exported, and is used for the embroidered aprons which the Armenian women wear. It also exports *loupes*, the walnut whorls or knots of which I have written before, oak galls, wax, wool, and manna, chiefly collected from the oak. The Bitlis people, and even some Europeans, regard this as a deposit left by the aromatic exhalations which the wind brings in this direction from Arabia, and they

say that it  
lies on any plant without regard to its  
nature, and even  
on the garments of men. The deposit is  
always greatest  
in dry years. In addition to the white  
manna, obtained  
by drying the leaves and allowing the  
saccharine matter to  
fall off—and the green, the result of steeping  
the leaves in  
water, which is afterwards strained, there is a  
product much  
like golden syrup, which is used for the same  
purposes.

<sup>1</sup> *Paradise Lost*, iii. 741, "Nor stayed, till on Mphates'  
top lie lights,"